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General Assembly
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42nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 23 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 15

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President: The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2003.

The five outgoing non-permanent members are the following: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. Those five States cannot be re-elected. Their names, therefore, should not appear on the ballot papers.

Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include in the year 2004 the following States: Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain. The names of those States, therefore, should also not appear on the ballot papers.

Of the five non-permanent members that will remain in office in the year 2004, two are from Africa and Asia, one is from Latin America and the Caribbean and two are from Western Europe and other States.

Consequently, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, the five non-permanent members should be elected according to the following pattern: three from Africa and Asia, one from Eastern Europe and one from Latin America and the Caribbean. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the three States to be elected from Africa and Asia, two should be from Africa and one from Asia.

I should also like to inform the Assembly that those candidates, their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, that receive the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates who have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairmen of the respective regional groups of the following.

For the three vacant seats from among the African and Asian States, there are three endorsed candidates, namely, Algeria, Benin and the Philippines. For the vacant seat from among the Eastern European States, there is one endorsed candidate, namely,

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Romania. For the vacant seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, there is one endorsed candidate, namely, Brazil.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

I should like to seek the usual cooperation of representatives during the time of the conduct of the elections. Please be reminded that during the voting process all campaigning should cease in the General Assembly Hall. That means, in particular, that once the meeting has begun, no more campaign material can be distributed inside the Hall. I intend to follow that to the letter. All representatives are also required to remain in their seats so that the voting process can proceed in an orderly manner. I would also seek the Assembly's cooperation and support regarding cellular phones. Please put them on "vibrate" if you feel you must have them on. It is very disconcerting, when we are in the middle of serious business, to hear those phones sound off. I thank you for your cooperation.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B" and "C" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "A", for the African and Asian States, the names of the three States for which they wish to vote; on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Eastern European States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote; and on the ballot papers marked "C", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote.

A ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. Names of Member States on a ballot paper that do not belong to that region will not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Alice Zaunschirm (Austria), Mr. Yusuf Mammedaliyev (Azerbaijan), Mr. Alfred Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon), Mrs. Luisa Fernanda Bonilla Galvão de Queiroz (Guatemala), Mr. Philippe Worré (Luxembourg) and Mr. Ali Al-Darmaki (Oman) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The President: I now suspend the meeting for thirty minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

The President: Before announcing the result of the voting, I would like to clarify that, in accordance with Article 19 of the Charter and resolution 58/1, of 16 October 2003, two Member States were not given ballot papers.

The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	182
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	182
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	182
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Benin	181
Philippines	179
Algeria	178
Republic of Korea	1

Group B — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	182
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	182
Abstentions:	7
Number of members voting:	175
Required two-thirds majority:	117
Number of votes obtained:	
Romania	174
Poland	1

Group C — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	182
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	182
Abstentions	4
Number of members voting:	178
Required two-thirds majority:	119

Number of votes obtained:

Brazil	177
Argentina	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the following States were elected members of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2004: Algeria, Benin, Brazil, the Philippines and Romania.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Security Council, and I sincerely thank the tellers for their assistance in the election.

We have thus concluded our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 15.

Programme of work

The President: I would like to remind representatives that on Monday, 27 October 2003, the Assembly will consider the cluster of items concerning the revitalization of the General Assembly, restructuring and reform. The Deputy Secretary-General will present an introduction at the beginning of the meeting. There are over 45 speakers inscribed to speak on the items. I appeal to members to consider putting forward suggestions and to participate personally at that meeting. I would also appeal to members to limit their statements to seven minutes.

Agenda item 160 (*continued*)

Global road safety crisis

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/228)

Draft resolution (A/58/L.3)

Mr. Tan (Singapore): As we have just elected five members of the Security Council, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate the five countries concerned.

At the outset, with regard to the agenda item entitled "Global road safety crisis", I would like to express our appreciation to the delegation of Oman for its efforts to bring that growing crisis to the world's attention.

Singapore welcomes this opportunity to discuss the growing road safety crisis. Motor vehicles have become such an efficient and convenient mode of transportation, as well as an essential part of our everyday lives in some form or other, that we often forget that these high-velocity, moving lumps of metal and plastic are also lethal weapons and, indeed — as some delegations have noted — weapons of mass destruction. Every year we pay a very heavy toll in human lives for that convenience.

According to the report (A/58/228) of the Secretary-General on the global road safety crisis, an estimated 1.26 million people worldwide died as a result of road traffic injuries in the year 2000. Road traffic injuries accounted for 2.2 per cent of global mortality, and were responsible for 25 per cent of all deaths due to injury. Also in the year 2000, road traffic crashes ranked as the ninth leading cause of death. The World Health Organization's (WHO) projections suggest that by 2020 road traffic injuries will overtake HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria to rank third among the causes of death and disability. Furthermore, the burden of road traffic injuries falls disproportionately on people in low- and middle-income countries.

Apart from the death toll and human cost, the approximate worldwide financial cost of road accidents is estimated at $500 billion. That is larger than the annual gross domestic product (GDP) of many small- and medium-sized economies. It is further estimated that the amount spent on repair work, medical assistance, investigations and other expenses incurred by accidents adds up to approximately 2 per cent of the GDP of developing countries annually. That is twice the total overseas development assistance provided to those countries.

In addition, the social cost of this growing crisis cannot be measured in dollars and cents. Happy families end up grieving over the untimely demise of loved ones or because of those traumatized for life. Formerly productive citizens become paralyzed or are marginalized from the workforce. Innocent children become orphaned, often owing to preventable circumstances, and face a lifetime of hardship and adversity.

We, the international community, have been remiss in not recognizing this escalating trend sooner. That is why Singapore values Oman's initiative. The WHO's decision to designate "Road safety" as the theme of World Health Day in 2004 is an important but long-overdue step in the right direction. It is only with

greater awareness that we can start to address the crisis individually and collectively.

As the Secretary-General's report notes, it is a sad fact that more than one third of road traffic deaths in 2000 — that is 435,000 deaths — occurred in South-East Asia. In other words, more than one third of the total road traffic deaths in the world occurred in a region with only 8 per cent of the world's population. Clearly more needs to be done to reverse this highly disturbing trend in our region.

Domestically, the Singapore Government has taken numerous steps in the last two decades to improve road safety in Singapore, based, as some of our fellow representatives have mentioned, on the "three Es" approach to road safety — engineering, enforcement and education.

In the area of engineering, experts from Singapore's Land Transport Authority regularly conduct road safety inspections to ensure that road conditions meet the highest standards of maintenance. Several engineering initiatives — such as alignment markers, crash cushions, bus-stop bollards and vibra-lines to warn drivers driving too close to the edge of the road — have also been implemented to improve road safety.

Enforcement also plays an important role in improving road safety. The enforcement of traffic rules is necessary to stop reckless and irresponsible road users from causing accidents and harm to others. Irresponsible road users face fines, suspension from driving and even jail terms.

Ultimately, however, education is the only guarantee for the long-term improvement in road safety. Education is crucial in creating responsible road users. For instance, anti-smoking campaigns are a good example of how effective a focused public education campaign can be in changing mindsets. Similarly, relying on inventive and catchy slogans, we should consider such approaches to educate members of the general public on their responsibilities as road users.

As part of the continuing process of educating road users on their responsibilities, various public education campaigns, events and programmes on road safety have been organized to reach out to all road users, be they drivers, motorcyclists, cyclists or pedestrians. Positive road habits are also reinforced through annual events, such as road safety outreach and anti-drink-and-drive and road courtesy campaigns.

With the "three Es" approach, Singapore has been able to bring about a steady drop in the number of fatalities and serious accidents over the past two decades. Last year, our fatality rate of 4.8 per cent per 100,000 people was the second lowest in 29 years. Any road accident that causes death or serious injury, however, is still one road accident too many. We can and will work together to further reduce this figure.

Singapore also welcomes opportunities to share experiences and learn from the best practices of others. We have done much through consultations and briefings on road safety education with visitors from such countries as China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Viet Nam and India. We have also made contributions at such forums as the seminar series of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) known as the Global Road Safety Partnership; the Road Safety Experts Group Meetings of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum; and the recent Asian Development Bank/ASEAN Road Safety Programme Workshop in Singapore. We will continue to cooperate fully with the international community in combating this problem.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore the seriousness of the problem with another simple illustration. At the current rate of deaths from road traffic accidents, more than 10 people will have died and 30 others been injured in the short duration of my speech.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): I join Singapore in congratulating the five newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council. We should also like to extend our appreciation to Oman for bringing this issue to the attention of the international community and for introducing the draft resolution before us, which we believe calls for all our support.

Agenda item 160, "Global road safety crisis", aptly reflects the concerns confronting all nations and the enormous costs imposed by road traffic injuries in terms of mortality, mobility and social and economic costs. Road accidents are the leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 44; 1.26 million people were killed on the roads in the year 2000. That is equivalent to 2.2 per cent of global mortality. The World Health Organization (WHO) projects that road traffic injuries

could rank third among causes of death and disability by the year 2020.

The statistics contained in document A/58/228 are consistent with these projections. Sadly, most of the deaths and fatal injuries could be preventable if suitable intervention were developed. While the primary responsibilities in this connection lie with Member States, we agree with the Secretary-General that there is a need for investment and partnerships to be fostered between the Member States and the United Nations system in sharing knowledge, best practices, lessons learned and resources. Regional coordination and cooperation will once again prove effective, especially in assisting developing countries, particularly those facing unique challenges, such as small island developing States, like my own country, Fiji.

In thanking the Secretary-General for his report, we rely on his coordination in forging ahead on such cooperation and partnerships, using all avenues that are at his disposal. We recognize in this connection the efforts of the WHO in designating the theme "Road safety" for the observance of World Health Day on 7 April 2004, as well as the launching of the *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention*. These efforts need all our full support to ensure that our sacred aims are realized. The *Report* calls on nations to enact programmes and initiatives to arrest the runaway statistics of the carnage on our roads. All these initiatives are well-meaning and hope to do as much they can. However, money is always a prohibitive factor. We count on the United Nations to assist us, as we have already alluded to.

Domestically, the Fiji National Road Safety Council was established by an act of Parliament in 1995. It is tasked with enhancing the safety of all road users. Educating road users has been a hallmark of the Council's campaign to cover rural and urban areas of Fiji. The campaign has also covered road users of different groups, schools, drivers and passengers in the use of all kinds of roads. The Council has enjoyed much success over the years, as indicated by the reduction in our road accident figures. Ideally, we would like achieve an accident rate of zero. However difficult this may be, the work of prevention will have to be relentless, continuous and versatile if it is to be interesting and eye-catching. The success of the National Road Safety Council is a result of the partnership between Government and the Council, on the one hand, and Mobil Oil, other oil companies and public support, on the other.

Our region has made innovative progress in promoting road safety procedures. The State of Victoria, Australia, has been assisting the Fiji police in the use of speed guns and providing equipment in teaching road safety. The Asian Development Bank has provided soft loans to help the Council further in realizing its designated responsibilities.

The high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly scheduled for 14 April 2004 can be attended, we trust, at the highest level possible to give the day proper recognition and to give substance to all the planned programmes and the development of road safety initiatives. It is our view that a lot of assistance is already available; the problem is making known the assistance that can help reduce our road safety figures. Fiji intends to persevere in its road safety programmes and is willing to assist other programmes, if wanted.

Mr. Gilman (United States of America): The United States fully supports the initiative addressing the global issue of traffic safety in the United Nations system and welcomes the opportunity to work with Member States on the most efficient and effective way to coordinate the exchange of information and the development of the best road traffic safety practices. The issue of road safety holds a prominent place in our national and international agendas.

At the national level, while the United States was able to reduce its annual traffic-related fatalities from 55,000 in the late 1960s to 42,000 last year, the fatality rate is still stagnant and the associated societal and economic costs continue to be too high at $230 billion a year. Moreover, we cannot be complacent about the annual deaths of some 42,000 United States citizens or simply accept that significant loss as an unavoidable part of living in a heavily-motorized society. Through this initiative, we look forward to learning from other nations about their successful strategies and we hope to offer some of our own.

At the international level, we have stepped up our activities to address traffic safety issues through our participation in the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety within the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). That group is the only existing United Nations working group that can appropriately respond to the call for action on this draft resolution.

The United States strongly believes that any coordinated initiatives to address the problem of global road safety should be managed within the existing UNECE Working Party. The infrastructure and technical expertise are in place and the UNECE's mandate is inclusive of non-European countries, including developing economies. We strongly recommend that the Chairman of the Working Party and its Secretariat be present at the 14 April plenary meetings in order to discuss how all of us can collectively use the Working Party's mandate to its fullest extent.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Geleta (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): At the outset, I should like on behalf of our organization to congratulate the newly elected members of the Security Council. As we debate this somewhat sad theme today, and given the speed with which we lose people on the roads, I wonder, as some colleagues have done, whether this theme may not become a Security Council issue some months from now.

At any rate, I should like to start by saying that this theme is of very deep concern to our organization, not only in the secretariat in Geneva, but also worldwide. In many cases, as the Assembly knows, Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers are the first to reach road crash sites, where they provide first aid, psychological support and ambulance services. We do this on a daily basis for crash victims in communities around the world. These communities and our volunteers are deeply affected by the preventable tragedies they encounter every day. They strongly believe that this particular crisis, or disaster, if you like, can be drastically reduced. We therefore welcome the attention being given to this issue by the General Assembly and trust that it will lead to concerted action at the regional and national levels to address the issues identified in the Secretary-General's report.

The statistics are so grim that I will not bother the Assembly with terrifying figures, since previous colleagues have covered these. I am sure, however, that many saw yesterday's BBC report informing us that, in just one of our beautiful European countries alone, on average 100 people die every day on the roads. No comment is needed, I believe.

As early as 1998, we were already raising the alarm. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) published a study on traffic accidents in its *World Disasters Report*. This study asked an unpleasant question: Must millions more die from traffic accidents before we act much faster? The central message here is that action needs to be taken by all of us — Governments, the private sector, civil society and the public at large — to deal with this disaster.

In 1999, during the International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, Governments and our national organizations committed themselves to a plan of action to respond to this growing problem through the further development of road safety measures, in partnership with other stakeholders. The implementation of the plan of action leaves a lot to be desired, particularly given the growing scale of this crisis.

IFRC strongly supports the actions undertaken by many of our national societies and, to a certain extent, expects more from our partners, the Governments. Although we are aware that each Government, however constrained it may be in skills, technology and resources, engages in road safety programmes, only six responded to the requirements of General Assembly resolution 57/309, according to the Secretary-General's report. However, we would like to make special note of Oman, Austria and Ethiopia, which have mounted active road safety campaigns in collaboration with their national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

Another very valuable illustration of collaboration is the European Red Cross road safety campaign, organized by 26 European national organizations and strongly supported by the European Commission. It is an active and powerful campaign, originally launched in 2002 and hosted by the German Red Cross. It works and it saves lives.

We recognize that partnerships are a prerequisite to the achievement of real progress in addressing this crisis. For our part, we are particularly pleased with the partnership that has been developed to bring together our resources with the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and, very importantly, the World Bank, the World Health

Organization (WHO) and the private sector. The result was the formation in 1999 of the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), which is hosted at our headquarters in Geneva. It is an active global partnership dedicated to the improvement of road safety, especially in developing countries, through the sharing of information and experience.

The partnership between the United Nations and the WHO in the production of reports and documentation for this debate is most welcome. We look forward to that institutional collaboration being taken to a new level in 2004, when World Health Day — 7 April — will have road safety as its theme. We and the Global Road Safety Partnership are working actively with the WHO and the World Bank on the preparation of the key document, the World report on road traffic injury prevention, to be launched on that day. As part of that theme, we urge all Governments to open dialogue with their national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to prepare for effective events to mark World Health Day and to support sustainable partnerships with both civil society and the private sector to address national road safety issues.

Furthermore, the IFRC will, through its first-aid work, take every appropriate opportunity to strengthen the capacity of communities to address the crisis we are discussing today. In many respects, the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on first aid provides the most human interface between the aforementioned sad statistics of the crisis and its impact on ordinary people. As the Assembly may be aware, in many European countries, it is compulsory that everyone pass a Red Cross first-aid course and examination before receiving a driver's license. We shall also work to ensure that these activities and the proposed high-level United Nations debate next April are built into the coordinated work to be carried out within the multilateral family.

In conclusion, to rephrase an old American saying, all roads are paved with good intentions. Let us work together to make those intentions a reality.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that, at the request of the sponsors of draft resolution A/58/L.3, action on the draft resolution will be taken at a later date, to be announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

Agenda item 50 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/359)

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/29 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the Observer for Partners in Population and Development.

Mr. Singh (Partners in Population and Development): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving us this opportunity to offer a few remarks in relation to agenda item 50 on behalf of the Partners in Population and Development.

First, let me say a few words about the Partners in Population and Development. As many members know, the Partners in Population and Development came into existence during the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) as an intergovernmental alliance of developing countries with a record of substantial success in reproductive health and population programmes and with a commitment to share with other developing countries their knowledge and experience. It now comprises 19 countries representing 54 per cent of the world population. During the ICPD+5 process, in 1999, the General Assembly specifically recognized the Partners as a major South-South initiative, and last year, as was mentioned, we were granted Permanent Observer status, which we hope to utilize to work closely with various United Nations agencies and programmes involved in population and development.

The four major areas covered by the Partners are family planning and reproductive health, maternal mortality and morbidity, issues concerning adolescents, and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The modalities that have been used to focus on those themes are policy dialogues, training, research and the dissemination of information, particularly on best practices and lessons learned. We work closely with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other United Nations agencies involved in population and development. In our view, the work that we do contributes to the furtherance and strengthening of South-South cooperation, which was one of the major

points in the Programme of Action of the 1994 Cairo Conference and which, we believe, is one of the major elements of the promotion of future cooperation among all countries in relation to strengthening the capacities of countries in the South.

The main topic we wish to touch upon here is integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. We agree that reviews and appraisals of the major United Rations conferences and summits should assess the progress made in the implementation of the commitments and provide an occasion to reaffirm the goals and objectives agreed at those conferences and summits, share best practices and lessons learned, and identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them and important measures for the further implementation of their programmes of action, as well as new challenges and emerging issues.

We expect that the ICPD+10 review — or the Cairo plus 10 review — in which we are particularly interested, will proceed fully along those lines. We look forward to the country-level assessment of progress and constraints in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action undertaken by the UNFPA. That assessment should give us valuable insights into what progress has been achieved towards the goals and objectives of the ICPD and what further action needs to be undertaken to achieve those goals by the year 2015. We also await with interest the outcomes of the regional meetings organized by the regional commissions, as well as the initiatives taken by civil society organizations.

Though it seems clear that no global intergovernmental conference on population and development will take place in 2004, we believe that at all levels — national, regional and international — various opportunities within and outside the United Nations will be used to refocus worldwide attention on themes and issues relating to further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, with particular attention to the issue of resource mobilization. We also believe that, if it is decided to organize a major meeting in 2005 to examine implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, issues related to population and development will form part of the agenda of such a meeting.

We see a clear relationship between the Millennium Development Goals and the ICPD goals and objectives. We fully share the view of the Secretary-General, expressed on many occasions, that the overall Millennium Goals of poverty eradication and gender equality are closely linked to the goals adopted by the ICPD in 1994; I refer in particular to those relating to reproductive health and population. We know that the UNFPA has already done a considerable amount of work on that topic. I wish to inform members that it is our intention to organize a number of policy dialogues, involving policy-makers and programme managers, on various aspects of this integral relationship. We hope that the outcomes of those dialogues, which will be published in the form of monographs, will contribute to continuing discussion on how such links between population themes and the Millennium Development Goals are to be established at the operational level.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.